

Summary of King County Reports

Report: United Indians of all Tribes Foundation Ina Maka Family Program; Community Needs & Readiness Assessment, 2017

Cross-Cutting Themes

Equity/Inequity/ Diversity/Inclusion/Disparities/Disproportionality

- Parents suggested that AIAN youth need specialized support, due to the history of discrimination and colonization.

Language and Cultural Competence

- Parents listed a variety of cultural values that are important to pass on to their children, including: respect for all peoples, learning their native language, respect for elders, connection to traditions and lands, sacredness of water and the environment, balance in all things, traditional cleansing and ceremony, and cultural pride and knowledge.
- Learning about AIAN history is another important way to help children understand who they are, their relationship to their community, and their place in the world.
- Schools need to learn more about diverse cultural approaches to child rearing
- Parents and elders agreed that some service providers still have a preconceived idea about who AIAN families are, and may not understand or have the training to address problems from a holistic perspective that includes all family members.

Poverty

- Heightened exposure to poverty is a risk factor. Native children in Seattle live in poverty at three times that of the community at large.

Solutions

- Parents can more effectively support children by staying connected with the school at all levels (pre-school, middle or high).
- It's important to provide family time to play and interact. It helps children understand boundaries, expectations, by physically active, and further develop strong connections among family members.
- Have youth meet with other AIAN youth to learn how they made it to college and overcame obstacles – it would be a great motivator.
- At-risk homeless youth noted the value of connecting mathematics skills to being independent, learning how to keep a household budget, and make financial decisions.
- Schools are community institutions that should reach out to AIAN community members to ensure that relationships develop.
- Having a parenting budgeting class would be very beneficial.
- Checking up on families with addiction issues would be a good way to make sure the children are healthy, safe and getting enough to eat.

Strength

- Daybreak Star Center provides culturally competent services that are a crucial resource for AIAN families.

- There is a network of services that many AIAN families are accessing, including TANF, Boys and Girls Club scholarships, food banks, DSHS, social workers, Indian Child Welfare, food stamps, breakfast at the Seattle Indian Health Board, Community Center play rooms, and others.

Empowered Communities and Responsive Early Learning Communities

Coordination

- Continued need to build relationships with area schools, social services programs and health programs.

Tribal Communities

- Native families expressed concern about educational opportunities, poverty, transportation, employment and discrimination
- Culture is a priority across all age groups, and parents are viewed as instrumental in ensuring children make the necessary cultural connections to support identity development and to best prepare children for situations in school and in other social settings where race and identity may come issues.

Healthy Children and Families

Adverse Childhood Experiences/Toxic Stress/Trauma

- Parents and elders agree that sever abuse, particularly in instances where children are removed and place in foster care, still remains a concern.

Food Security and Nutrition

- Common problem: running out of food before the end of the month
- Youth need to learn about nutrition in school and how to practice good nutrition. Students who need free breakfast and lunch need to be connected to those services.

Infant Mortality

- The infant mortality rate for AIAN infants in Washington is more than twice that for the general population.
- Poor birth outcomes, including premature births and sudden infant death syndrome

Mental Health

- There is a lack of therapists who are AIAN or who have experience working with AIAN, as well as a lack of cultural humility or compassion.
- There is a lack of behavioral health and substance abuse treatment options specifically for AIAN youth.

Maternal and Family Health/Expectant Families

- There is limited prenatal care for American Indians and Alaska Natives

Parental Risk Factors (Substance Abuse, Smoking, Abuse, etc.)

- Native women in King County report physical abuse before or during pregnancy at a rate three times that of all other races.
- Common problem: depression, anxiety or stress

- Need to continue to reinforce with parents the importance of being substance free, reducing abuse and neglect, and providing resources to meet basic needs such as food, housing and clothing.
- Parents need therapists and counselors who are supportive and non-judgmental.
- Parents noted that alcohol problems remain an issue among AIAN families. However, treatment facilities have long wait lists and/or do not offer culturally competent care.

Positive Early Learning Experiences

Home Visiting

- Elders agreed that home visiting offers a valuable opportunity for new parents to learn how to organize and regulate their time to better prepare children for school

PreK

- Parents expressed strong interest in having more than one AIAN-specific preschool available in King County.

Supportive and Seamless Transitions

- Parents have concerns about schools, including overall adjustment, lack of cultural fit, behavioral adjustment, potty training, safety at school, lack of literacy preparedness, transportation, coordinating school and work hours, cost, availability of clothing and supplies, speech therapy, immunizations, and lack of ability of school staff to build relationships with children.
- Parents need opportunities to talk with teachers and school administrators to ask questions and help best prepare children to enter school.

Strong, Stable, Nurturing and Supported Families

Child Welfare System and Prevention

- AIAN children are referred into the foster care system at a rate more than seven times that of White children, and are placed in foster care at nearly two times the rate for White children.
- Parents expressed concern about Indian Child Welfare system, including abuse.
- AIAN children are often placed in non-Native homes, which puts them at higher risk for bad outcomes.

Family Economic Needs

- AIAN unemployment rate is nearly two times that for all other races.
- Common problem: not enough money and unemployment

Housing

- Common problem: poor housing conditions
- Families without homes or who face housing insecurity noted a severe lack of programs for homeless families.
- Families experiencing homelessness need their basic need met, such as showering a warm safe place to sleep with children, clothing and food.

Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

- Parents need support within a culturally grounded and supported environment. Strong interest in an AIAN parenting group.

Transportation

- Travel time to United Indians preschool in Seattle results in preschoolers having to be on a bus for extended periods of time, which disrupts schedules and increases stress.
- Families facing severe hardships noted there is a lack of financial support and social service support for them to be involved in cultural activities. The primary barrier is transportation.